

Message Text

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ACTION AF-06

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AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

C O N F I D E A T I A L MOGADISCIO 0366

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, MORG, SO

SUBJ: ARMY UNREST IN SOMALIA

REF MOGADISCIO 0349

1. WE REPORTED EARLIER -- MOGADISCIO 349 -- THAT ELEMENTS OF SOMALI NATIONAL ARMY (SNA) WERE ACUTELY DISSATISFIED WITH SIAD'S ASSIGNMENT OF HIS FELLOW TRIBESMEN TO KEY COMMAND POSITIONS.

2. EGYPTIAN MILITARY ATTACHE TOLD US MARCH 1 THAT WITHIN PAST TWO WEEKS EVIDENCE OF DISSATISFACTION IN MILITARY HAD BEEN WIDESPREAD AMONG YOUNGER OFFICERS AND SENIOR NCO'S AND THAT REASONS FOR RESTRICTIVE

NESS WENT FAR BEYOND TRIBAL CONSIDERATIONS. ACCORDING COLONEL HALIM, YOUNGER MILITARY OFFICERS COMPLAINTS WERE TARGETED AT NATURE OF SIAD REGIME ITSELF AND HIS SOVIET DEPENDENCY, WHICH HAD BANKRUPTED COUNTRYZLHILE AT SAME TIME LIMITED SNA FREEDOM OF INITIATIVE. OFFICERS WERE CRITICAL OF SOVIET MILITARY ADVISORS WHO KEPT SNA ON THREE-DAY POL RESERVES AND WITHHELD OTHER MILITARY EQUIPMENT DELIVERIES VITAL TO NSA. WHILE AMMUNITION AND ARTILLERY EQUIPMENT MORE PLENTIFUL, NEVERTHELESS THIS INSUFFICIENT TO GIVE SNA FIREPOWER AND FLEXIBILITY IT MIGHT REQUIRE IN CRUNCH.

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OFFICERS ALSO COMPLAINED THAT RELIANCE ON SOVIET UNION

HAD NOT RPT NOT BENEFITTED ECONOMY OF COUNTRY: FOREIGN EXCHANGE RESERVES WERE EXHAUSTED AND FOOD SHORTAGES WIDESPREAD, WITH NO SIGN THAT CONDITIONS WILL IMPROVE.

3. HALIM SAID THAT DISAFFECTION OF YOUNGER OFFICERS HAD QUICKLY REACHED EARS OF NSS CHIEF AHMED SULEIMAN WHO SUBSEQUENTLY SPOKE TO GROUPS OF YOUNGER OFFICERS AND CAUTIONED THEM THAT THEIR CRITICISM OF REGIME WOULD NOT RPT NOT BE TOLERATED. HE ALSO TOLD THEM THAT THEIR VIEW OF REGIME WAS NECESSARILY A LIMITED ONE, THAT POLICIES OF SIAD AND SUPREME REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL (SRC) REFLECTED LARGER POLITICAL AND SOCIAL REALITIES AND THAT SDR POLICY COURSE AT PRESENT WAS IN BEST INTERESTS OF SOMALIA AT THIS STAGE OF ITS DEVELOPMENT.

NO ARRESTS WERE MADE.

4. ACCORDING TO HALIM, MILITARY UNREST IS NOT RPT NOT IN ANY WAY ORGANIZED AT PRESENT. BELIEF IS ALSO WIDESPREAD IN SNA -- AND ELSEWHERE -- THAT SIAD'S CURRENT TRIP TO MOSCOW WAS FOR MEDICAL NO LESS THAN POLITICAL REASONS. MANY BELIEVE SIAD SUFFERING FROM SERIOUS THROAT AILMENT -- PERHAPS CANCER -- WHICH WILL REQUIRE HOSPITALIZATION AFTER CONCLUSION OF 25TH PARTY CONGRESS IN MOSCOW. REPORTS ABOUT SIAD'S ILLNESS HAVE BEEN CIRCULATING HERE SINCE MID-JANUARY AT LEAST AND WE DO NOT RPT NOT KNOW THEIR ORIGINS. (FYI. AT TIME OUR ACTING CHARGE SPENT TWO AND HALF HOURS WITH SIAD ON JANUARY 27 REPORTS WERE ALREADY ABROAD HERE THAT SIAD HAD BEEN EVACUATED BY AIR EITHER TO ROME OR MOSCOW FOR EMERGENCY MEDICAL TREATMENT. DURING COURSE OF JANUARY 27 CONVERSATION, SIAD GAVE NO INDICATION THAT HE WAS IN ILL-HEALTH. ONLY DEPARTURE FROM HIS NORMAL BEHAVIOR WAS THAT HE SMOKED FAR LESS THAN USUAL. END FYI).

5. HALIM BELIEVES THAT SNA DISSIDENTS DO NOT RPT NOT REPRESENT SPECIFIC THREAT TO REGIME AT PRESENT AND THAT YOUNGER OFFICERS, AS WELL AS OTHER DISGRUNTLED SRC MEMBERS, ARE WATCHING AND WAITING FOR OUTCOME OF SIAD'S MOSCOW VISIT -- BOTH MEDICALLY AND OTHERWISE.

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6. COMMENT: WE SUSPECT SRC MEMBER GOSMAN JELLE IS PROBABLY SOURCE OF MUCH OF HALIM'S INFORMATION. JELLE IS PRO-ARAB SRC MEMBER WHO HAS SERIOUS RESERVATIONS ABOUT SIAD'S DEPENDENCY ON USSR. ANY REPORTS PASSED TO EGYPTIANS WHICH EMPHASIZES HALF-HEARTED NATURE OF SOVIET MILITARY SUPPORT, TOGETHER WITH ITS CRIPPLING ECONOMIC CONSEQUENCES, IS PLAYING ON STRINGS WHICH ARE WELL REGGED FOR CAIRO'S BOW. WE NEVERTHELESS BELIEVE THAT HALIM'S INFORMATION IS PROBABLY RELIABLE.

LOUGHRAN

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